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Minutes

Alumni Association Board of Directors

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2003

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Alumni Association Executive Board, Illinois Wesleyan University

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**Illinois Wesleyan University Alumni Association  
Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting  
October 10, 2003**

**Board members present:** Jean Baird '80, Pat Bass '66, Jennifer Frahm '94, Todd French '93, Jim Graehling '72, Deon Hornsby '97, Esteban Lizano '01, Marilyn Neis '71, Tom Neis '70, Barbara Nielsen '85, Larry Rollings '67, Mark Sheldon '70, Tracy Wych '77

**Board members unable to attend:** Ray Berger '70, Debra Burt-Frazier '75, Kris Condon '84, Carl Dixon '70, Sherry Graehling '72, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens '78, John Horton '82, Scott Huch '86, Ansel Johnson '81, Amy Tenhouse '97, Britt Travis '81

**Guest:** Mark Aubry '95

**IWU Administration/Staff present:** Emmalyn Dickinson, Alumni Relations Office Coordinator; Mona Gardner, Special Assistant to the President/Adlai H. Rust Professor of Finance; Jeff Hanna, Vice President of University Communications; Jennifer Lehman, Associate Director of Development/Parent Fund; Janet McNew, Acting President; Sara Powell '72, Associate Director of Development-Chicago Region; Beth Raboin-Gettleman '99, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations; Steve Seibring '81, Director of Alumni Relations; Monica Taylor '88, Director of Multicultural Affairs; Anke Voss-Hubbard, Archivist, Special Collections Librarian and Assistant Professor; Lora Wey '88, Associate Director of Development/Associates Program.

**Welcome and Introductions:**

The meeting was called to order by Mark Sheldon, Alumni Association Executive Board President. He thanked everyone for making time to attend the meeting.

Mark introduced Esteban Lizano '01, and Jennifer Frahm '94, new members of the Board, and Mark Aubry '96, a guest, who would be participating in the annual fund presentation. Mark also welcomed Janet McNew, Acting President and Mona Gardner, Special Assistant to the President.

**Approval of the Minutes of the Last Executive Board Meeting:**

Mark Sheldon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the last Executive Board meeting. A motion was made and seconded and the Executive Board members voted to approve the minutes as presented.

Mark reported that the minutes of the Alumni Council Meeting would be approved at the next meeting of the Alumni Council.

### **Executive Board President's Report:**

Mark noted that this was the first Executive Board meeting since Minor's death. He shared his personal experiences and feelings about Minor. He noted that Minor had a great curiosity about so many things and was always investigating how new inventions and product enhancements could improve higher education and, particularly, the educational experience for students at Illinois Wesleyan.

Mark asked the Board to take heart in the legacy that Minor has given us and move forward with renewed energy and renewed momentum to achieve his vision.

Following his remarks about Minor, Mark thanked the members of the Alumni Relations Office and Development Office for all they do during the year to advance Illinois Wesleyan. Mark reminded members that this is the time of year to think about their pledges and their gifts to Illinois Wesleyan. He urged members to consider increasing their gift this year in order to keep the momentum going.

In Mark's introduction of Janet McNew, he noted what a great job she was doing as acting president to keep the University on track and moving forward. He particularly commended her on her strong focus, interest and dedication to alumni affairs.

### **University Update (Janet McNew):**

Janet McNew emphasized that Minor would not want us to dwell on our losses. She noted that the past year has been very hard on the IWU community with the loss of two presidents, Lloyd Bertholf and Minor, two students, and two active faculty members.

Janet reported that one of the most enjoyable parts of her job is meeting with alumni.

Janet noted that everyone--faculty, students, staff, alumni and friends--needs to be thinking broadly and deeply about the future of Illinois Wesleyan, because, everyone has a very big stake in the flourishing of this institution. Janet reported that even during this difficult, transitional time, there are a number of very positive things going on at IWU including the following:

- Mona Gardner and her steering committee produced a substantial self-study document for the NCAA that not only granted us 10 more years of accreditation, but gave us no monitoring visits, no interim reports. This is quite an achievement--a very small percent of colleges reviewed do not have some kind of interim report required during this 10-year period. In addition, our report was so good, that the NCAA is featuring IWU's report at its national convention. Janet believes the reason the report was so well received is that

it has in depth data to back up its assertions, and it was self critical and honest in its analysis. Some significant challenges were cited in this report, and the IWU community needs to be thinking about how it will meet them. The self-study feeds directly into the strategic planning process.

- Janet has established a Speakers Committee that includes faculty, students, alumni relations and student affairs. This group advises the president on speakers for the University's major events; i.e., Commencement, Founders' Day, President's Convocation, etc. This group should provide a more long-range, planned approach to selecting speakers. A member of the Board of Trustees will also be included on this committee.
- There is a good academic affairs team in place made up of Roger Schnaitter, acting provost; Tom Griffiths, acting head of the faculty; and Paul Bushnell, senior adviser to the faculty. In addition, Mona Gardner, who was brought in by Minor as special assistant to the president, is coordinating the institutional research area for the University. This area is involved with reporting data to government, US News, etc., as well as internal management reporting. This area is also closely involved in the planning process.
- The multicultural study group appointed by Minor in spring 2002 has presented a substantial report to McNew. The recommendations are currently under consideration.
- After two years of downturn in the endowment, it is moving in the right direction now.
- The transition from Jim Ruoti to Jerry Pope as Dean of Admissions has gone smoothly. Janet reported the following statistics:
  - 2,100 total enrollment
  - 580 first-year students
  - Acceptance rate -- 42%
  - Average ACT score -- 28.6
  - Diversity category up—but not where we want it to be.

### **Trustees Report:**

Tom Neis reported the following;

- Bonds are being moved to a lower interest rate.
- The boiler has been replaced.
- North Central accreditation report was very positive.

- Alumni Association representation on the Board of Trustees has given a new feel to the Board that has provided a new perspective on various Board issues.
- The Board goal is to have 100% trustee participation in donating to IWU. Trustees have been encouraged to take a leadership role in this effort.
- The Board has had some discussion about the need for additional living units on campus. However, the Board's current priority is to continue improving the financial condition of the University. In responding to a question, Tom noted that the University is not planning to grow beyond the target 2,000 students.
- The endowment has dropped over the past couple of years. As a result of this decline, the Board has committed itself to being the leaders in taking a prudent approach to managing the endowment in the future.

Mark Sheldon noted that he has consistently raised the issue of diversity with the Board--it is the one issue from the University's last accreditation report that has not yet really been addressed.

Tom responded that the Board has made significant strides this past year in creating greater diversity on the Board.

### **Strategic Planning:**

Mark reported that Jean Baird would be replacing him on the strategic planning committee.

Mona Gardner distributed a summary of the Executive Board's comments regarding the Mission Statement draft that was presented at the last meeting. She reported that the Board members' comments were communicated to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and were discussed by the committee during various stages of the redraft process.

Mona reviewed with the Executive Board the process to date:

- During the accreditation period all institutions are required to review their mission statement. They are not required to change it, but they need to review it to make sure it is still reflective of the institution. IWU's last mission statement was approved in 1989.
- The Executive Committee of the Board asked the Faculty Committee to review the Mission Statement to see if it needed to be redrafted, and, if so, present the Committee with a new draft.
- The Faculty Committee presented a first draft to the Executive Committee last year.

- The draft presented today is different from the first draft presented to the Board. The current draft has incorporated a number of the comments received from various groups including alumni. It was felt that the first draft was a very faculty-centered document that was not inclusive of the entire community.
- The committee redrafted the Mission Statement based on these comments and keeping with the guideline that it be no more than one paragraph.
- The draft has been approved by the faculty and will go to the Board for approval later this month.

Mark Sheldon asked the members to review the issues that were brought up at their last meeting and distributed by Mona this morning. He noted that some issues had not been addressed in the current draft including the following:

- Focus on developing leadership in students. (Mona noted that this had been discussed and a conscious decision was made not to include this in the draft because there was no guarantee that the University could provide this opportunity to every student.)
- Reference to the lifelong learning concept not included.
- A question arose as to the accuracy of the University's commitment to environmental sustainability. (Mona responded that the University has done a great deal of work in this area.)

Mona reported that the next step in the planning process is to develop a Vision Statement. This statement explains how the University will accomplish its mission and become stronger in the future.

Mona stated that the Vision Statement redraft has been postponed until February and there will be an opportunity, probably electronically, for the Executive Committee and other alumni to provide comments on the revised statement. She also noted that she still has the comments made by the Executive Board members at the May meeting.

She noted that there are many interesting discussion topics going on in the strategic planning process, but the University does not want to move too quickly in the midst of a presidential search. No one wants to close off the opportunity for a new president to make a substantial contribution to the planning process.

Mona reported that the planning issues the Board of Trustees is looking at now include:

- Identifying institutions that can accurately serve as benchmarks for IWU.

- Determining the role that rankings will play in the future of liberal arts colleges.

Mark Sheldon noted that it is important that everyone have his or her say in the planning process.

### **Presidential Search:**

Mark Sheldon reported on the Presidential Search Committee. Its membership is made up of the following people:

#### **Eight Trustees**

- Gil Dorsey '62, Chairman
- Herb Getz '77
- John Jordan '57
- Ruby Kingston H'96
- Tom McKinney '76
- George Vinyard '71
- Steve Wannemacher '73
- Susan Waring

#### **Five Faculty Members**

- Brian Hatcher – Chair of the Religion Dept.
- Nancy Loitz – Director of the School of Theater Arts
- Carolyn Nadeau – Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies
- Alison Sainsbury—Associate Professor of English
- Mike Young – Professor of History

#### **Staff & Administration**

- Cathy Spitz – HR Director

#### **Student Senate**

- J.R. Glen
- Trevor Sierra

The committee has just begun the search process with the help of a Chicago-based search firm.

Mark noted that if alums had comments or recommendations regarding the search, they should contact Gil Dorsey.

### **Newsletter:**

Steve Seibring read Kris Condon's report that included the following points:

- At the last meeting, the Executive Board gave the go ahead to Kris Condon, Steve Seibring and Jeff Hanna to come up with a plan for newsletters.

- As a result of a survey of editors, the discussion at the May meeting of the Executive Board, and a subsequent meeting with Steve Seibring and Jeff Hanna, Kris concluded that the most cost-effective method of communicating with our alumni would involve both written and electronic contact.
- In a letter to classmates this past June, Kris outlined the following approach in response to the most feasible suggestions offered by the editors:
  - Newsletters produced once annually and distributed in August/Septembers with the Class Agent packet
  - The exception to this annual approach will be in the year preceding a class reunion and the reunion year itself when the newsletter editor will be asked to produce letters every six months.
  - In addition to written correspondence, we will set up a Web site –(this brings up some generational issues regarding communication)

Steve Seibring reported that we are setting up an online board where daily, at any time, a classmate may go into the site, give an update, and it will stay up there for their classmates to see. Periodically these messages will be cycled off. Newsletter editors are also being encouraged to put their report on the Web so the news will be more current.

Steve also noted that the reason for doing newsletters twice a year during the year prior to a reunion year and during the reunion year itself is to publicize reunions and encourage attendance.

Steve stated that he feels this process will work well and will save money in the long run, which was one of the goals in this process. The sixty separate mailings that have been done twice a year will be reduced and combined with another mailing. The new process will save on postage and, at the same time, allow for immediate updates on the Web.

Steve noted that we still need to address engaging the newsletter editors in this process.

The monthly e-connection will contain a link for the newsletter.

### **Annual Fund:**

Lora Wey reported that the annual fund goal for this year is \$4.042 million. She provided a breakdown of the different ways funds are solicited and she note the successes to date:

- Celeste Flachsbart heads up the Class Agent program. Her last direct mail solicitation resulted in the following:
  - 663 responses(about a 5% return)
  - 186 new gifts
  - 354 of the 663 increased their giving



- We are 51% ahead of where we were last year at this time.
- The phonathon has gotten off to a great start in September. The coordinator, Sherry McClarty, is very creative and energetic and she has infused that energy into the students. They set a goal of raising \$250,000 and, right now, they have received \$81,000 in pledges.

Lora noted how IWU compares to other schools:

- For overall dollars raised compared to our benchmark schools, we fall in the lower percentage.
- IWU compares very favorably to the other schools in the CCIW.
- As compared to other schools in the Midwest, IWU falls somewhere in the middle.

Lora stated that Minor had wanted to see our alumni participation rise to 50%. She encouraged the members of the Executive Board to help achieve this goal by being ambassadors for the fund and getting the word out to classmates.

Mark Aubry reported on his involvement in the annual fund and the program he was heading up titled "Vote for IWU". Events have been held for young alumni in Peoria, Champaign, Bloomington-Normal and Chicago. The purpose of these events was to educate young alums on the importance of participating in the annual fund and what it means with regard to IWU's ranking and, ultimately, the value of their degree.

Lora noted that we have been fortunate to have people from the 90's who are starting to set the pace for the rest of the decades. Lora recognized the hard work of Esteban Lizano as the decade champ for the 90's. She noted that his class, alone, has 14 volunteers. And, she went on to say that if everyone had the same enthusiasm as Mark and Esteban, IWU would be at 50% participation.

Tracy Wych stated that there should be a program for undergraduates that encourages them to stay connected with the University.

Pat Bass stated that those colleges on the list that are performing better than IWU have an annual fund program that is largely alumni-driven. And, she noted, until Illinois Wesleyan can achieve that same kind of alumni involvement, it is not going to realize the same success that these other institutions have achieved.

Steve Seibing asked the group to consider what it can do to energize alumni.

Esteban reported that his group is planning to concentrate on non-donors. He feels that if his group can get the non-donors over the hump of not giving, they will continue to give.

Pat Bass reported that she went through an alumni challenge for participation at the University where she worked. She stated that it cost a lot of money to raise money and that we definitely need to get the people we are soliciting to continue to give and to increase their giving over time in order for this participation program to pay off.

Lora Wey reported that the University is getting very close to naming a new annual fund director and John Horton has expressed interest in stepping down as annual fund chair. Lora asked that members let her know of anyone who is interested in serving as the annual fund chair.

### **Regions:**

Beth Raboin-Gettleman reported the following regional activity since the Board's last meeting:

- June and July were slower months, but there were three very good events:
  - Rockford = 55 attendees
  - St. Louis = 25 attendees
  - Peoria = 40 attendees
- Since August 1, there have been nine events (approximately one per week)
  - Cub Game = 150 attendees
  - Chicago Golf Outing = 94 attendees
  - Springfield = 54 attendees
  - Milwaukee = 46 attendees
  - Washington DC = 44 attendees
  - San Francisco = 42 attendees
  - Quad Cities = 22 attendees
  - Atlanta = 15 attendees

Beth reported that the Alumni Office has been engaging more alumni in the region to help in the planning of regional events. She noted that the staff has wanted events to be more alumni-driven and that this process is now beginning to happen.

After the Board's May meeting, the Alumni Office began experimenting with Hosting Committees to engage alums in regional planning and foster some leadership in the regions. Alumni have been asked for their suggestions about what would be an appropriate time and venue for a regional event, and what kind of speaker we should have. The Hosting Committee members have also been asked to promote the event and encourage local alumni to attend. They are also in charge of greeting alumni and friends when they arrive at the event.

Beth noted that the Hosting Committee concept has worked out so well, we are beginning to move this effort to the next level. For example:

- In Milwaukee the Hosting Committee organized their own night of phoning and contacted 60% of the alumni living in the area to tell them about the event.
- San Francisco put together a committee of 11 people who spanned the generations from 1942 to 2000. The committee's age diversity resulted in people from all ages attending the event.
- The Springfield event was so successful that the alumni expressed the desire to do it again next year, and Bill Roberts agreed to host it again.

Beth stated that the Hosting Committee concept is engaging alumni, cultivating leadership and, over time, will aid in the development of a formal leadership structure for each region.

Marilyn Neis noted the success of neighborhood connections in Chicago. She feels that alumni are more receptive to these smaller, more intimate gatherings.

### **Homecoming/Class Reunions:**

Steve Seibring reported that we had 632 people respond to the homecoming invitation. However, he noted that there are always a number of alumni who do not register before the day of homecoming. Steve anticipates an additional 200 alums will attend homecoming bringing the total to 832 participants.

### **Minority Alumni Network:**

Monica Taylor reported that the Minority Alumni Network held a strategic planning meeting in June and determined the following:

- 2003-2004 Minority Alumni Network Officers
  - Co-Chairs: Ansel Johnson '81, and Debra Burt-Frazier '75 (They act as spokespeople at Network events, represent MAN on the Executive Board of the Alumni Association and at other venues that require representation)
  - Communications Chair – Nicole Brown-Davis '99, and Derek Davis '98 (They will work with the alumni office to publish the *Network Voice*--a newsletter highlighting activities of students and the network)
  - Fund-raising chair – Vacant (They are looking to this position with a younger alum)
  - Mentoring Chair – Muneerah Maalik '00 (She is developing a pool of 20 alumni volunteers to serve as mentors for our current students. She is coordinating an event for homecoming weekend for the mentors and students following the football game.)
  - Recruitment Chair -- Malik Jones '91 (He is working with Beni Towers Kawakita, minority admissions counselor. They have sent a letter to alums. They also want to recruit 20 alums to help with recruitment activities for perspective minority students.)

- Social Chair -- Deon Hornsby (He has coordinated a number of activities over the years, but he is relocating to New York soon, so there will be another leadership position to fill.)
- Alumni Recognition Chair – Kristin Gregory '03 (She highlights the accomplishment of alumni at MAN Homecoming events each Year. She is also responsible for doing a presentation on the history of minority alumni at IWU at the Network's Black History Month celebration in February every year.)
- Student Recognition Chair -- Monica Taylor '88 (She will recruit four students for the committee and they will highlight the accomplishments of current IWU students in the categories of academics, extracurricular activities, athletics and outstanding first-year student. This student recognition will occur each year at the Black History Month Celebration.)
- The MAN board decided to invite Asian/American alumni and students to events and that has happened.
- The MAN board is encouraging the addition of younger alumni to leadership roles on the board. This has happened with the addition of Kristin and Muneerah to the board.

Monica reported that the Minority Alumni Network held its annual picnic on August 3, in Robbins IL. Approximately 60 people attended. Prospective students and their families were also invited.

Monica noted that a short board meeting was held prior to the picnic. At this meeting, the board decided to recognize Minor Myers at homecoming for all his contributions to the network. The Minority Alumni Network actually started during Minor's presidency. The recognition will take place on Sunday of homecoming. Trustee Phyllis Barker will be presenting a plaque to Ellen Myers.

- Other MAN homecoming activities include:
  - A reception at the underground of the Memorial Center Friday evening—provides an opportunity for alums to interact with students
  - A reception will be held Saturday at 4:00 p.m. for Delta Sigma Theta sorority and the Minority Alumni Network.
  - A gospel service and recognition ceremony will be held Sunday at 11:00 a.m. in Evenly Chapel.

Monica reported the plans for February's Black History Month celebration are under way. The Black Student Union will be honored at this event—BSU is celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> year at IWU.

Monica closed her remarks by thanking Beth Raboin-Gettleman for all she has done for the network this past year.

### **Ames Library Archives and Minor Myers, jr. Honors Collection:**

Anke Voss-Hubbard distributed materials regarding the IWU archives. It holds the records of the University going back to 1850. These records are available for research to anyone (no restrictions). Anke noted that Special Collections are separate from the archives.

Anke reported that Sandra Steingraber has agreed to donate all of her research documents on the environment to IWU. She noted how pleased Minor would be about this.

Anke also reported that her area has just completed microfilming and digitizing the entire run of the Argus, and it will be available during homecoming weekend.

Anke stated that the library committee determined that the Minor Myers jr. Collection which will be displayed in the Great Reading Room of the Ames Library should be comprised of books that have won awards beginning in 1989—the year Minor began as president of IWU.

### **Online Directory:**

Steve Seibring reported the online directory is almost ready to go. Demonstration models have been placed near the homecoming registration desk so that alums can see how the online directory works and, also, give them the opportunity to look up some of their classmates.

Steve noted that alums could hide any information about themselves that they want to keep private.

He also reported that besides the printed warning that the directory is not to be used for business purposes or solicitation, there is an internal program in place that discourages the use of the online directory for business purposes by limiting the number of searches per day and notifying the alumni office of multiple searches being done on a daily basis.

Alumni will also be given the opportunity to order a print directory. The print directory will be produced, marketed and sold by an outside vendor.

### **Alumni Association Annual Report:**

Steve Seibring reported that the Alumni Association report included with the Executive Board's meeting materials was still in draft form. He noted that this reporting effort is the beginning of setting benchmarks and formally recording the activities of the Alumni Association and the Alumni Office. When it is finalized, the report will be sent to all Executive Board members and the alumni leadership group.

### **Nominating Committee Report:**

Larry Rollings reported that the nominating committee will be contacting Executive Board members whose terms are expiring this coming year to see if they will continue on the Board. The committee will also be recruiting new members.

Since Mark Sheldon is stepping down this next year, the nominating committee will also be looking at candidates for the Board of Trustees as well as considering candidates for the alumni awards presented annually at homecoming.

Nominating Committee members are Larry Rollings (Chair), Jean Baird, Amy Tenhouse, Mark Sheldon and Steve Seibring (ex officio).

A question was raised as to whether the Executive Board membership should include a representative from the Student Senate. It was considered a good idea and the nominating committee will consider adding the Student Senate president to the membership of the Executive Board.

### **Homecoming Duties:**

Steve Seibring asked Executive Board members to greet people as they enter the Shirk Center for the alumni luncheon. He noted that this year there is a new way to have alumni proceed to the luncheon. There will be a parade of classes from the Eckley Quad to the Shirk Center. Classic cars will accompany the classes in the parade.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch at Tommy's

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Rollings '67  
Executive Board Secretary  
Illinois Wesleyan University Alumni Association